A

LETTER,

To the Right Honourable the

LORDS of the ADMIRALTY;

Setting Forth

The Inconveniences and Hardſhips, the *Marine Officers* are Subject to, who ſerve on Board the FLEET.

By an OFFICER, in that Service during the late WAR,

LONDON:

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A LETTER

To the Right Honourable the

Lords of the Admiralty, &c.

My LORDS,

IT may be neceſſary, before I enter on the ſubject of this letter, to ſay I ſerved as Captain of Marines during the late war on board ſeveral ſhips, and that I ſpeak of what I have ſeen and heard from undoubted authority; that I am now out of that ſervice, nor is it likely I ſhould ever ſerve the King on that particular duty again: I therefore hope, that what I here offer, will be

underſtood to be written with no other view, but to lay before your Lordſhips ſome inconveniencies the marine officers are ſubject to, which the ſea officers are not, and which (though of great conſequence to them) has been hitherto thought too trifling a conſideration amidſt matters of more importance. For theſe reaſons I take the liberty to expreſs my good wiſhes, for the benefit of my kindred corps, and for the good of the whole, that gentlemen engaged on the ſame duty, for the ſame good King, and with the ſame zeal for his ſervice, may have, according to their rank, an equal right with the ſea officers to the conveniencies the ſhip affords, and that they may all be conſidered as part owners of the veſſels they ſerve in; and that no individual has a right to call it *his*, but the King, to whom it belongs.

It may not be improper to obſerve, that thoſe who are not bred to the ſea, cannot carry *their ſea legs and ſtomachs on board with them like ſailors*, and therefore ought rather to have ſome particular indulgence on their firſt embarking, than find themſelves in the ſtate they often do. I muſt alſo ſay, before I ſtate the caſe of my brethren, that I was well received in every ſhip I ſerved, and kindly treated by its commander, and therefore

fore what follows does not ariſe from pique or prejudice.

It ſometimes happens, that thoſe with whom the chief authority is lodged, are apt to over-rate their own importance; and ſuch who do, are alſo moſt apt to undervalue thoſe with whom they are to act, whether equals or ſuperiors; and therefore, for fairneſs ſake, I beg leave to ſuppoſe there is no difference (but in the command) between a Captain of a man of war and a Captain of marines, the former went to ſea young, ſerved as a midſhipman, from thence was made a lieutenant, and ſo on, the latter did the ſame in the land ſervice with a pair of colours, &c. much might be ſaid, how eaſier a ſea life is to ſuch who are accuſtomed from boys to it, than thoſe who enter into it later in life; but I ſhall paſs that, and ſuppoſe the marine Captain, when firſt promoted from his lieutenancy in a marching regiment, or a cornetcy of dragoons, who perhaps never was before on board a man of war, juſt embarked, and waiting (as is his duty) on the ſhip Captain, whom he finds in a large apartment elegantly fitted up, as well as convenient, and almoſt at the King's expence; and after dining with him, and ſuch other civilities as paſs between Gentlemen that are ſtrangers to each other, the Marine takes his leave, and

the ſhip Captain orders a Quarter-maſter to ſhew the Captain of marines his ‡ Birth.

He is then conducted to the Hatch-way, and is aſtoniſhed to find the Road to his apartment ſo very dirty, and unlike that he juſt left: but his aſtoniſhment is much increaſed when he arrives at his Birth, a place between two guns, about ſeven foot long, and four foot wide, and divided only from ſome hundred Hammocks, by a little canvas or an old ſail, where there is no light but from a candle, nor no air but what is unavoidably very foul, and as unwholeſom as it is unpleaſant. Here the diſatisfaction with his lodging, the motion of the ſhip, and many other things too tedious to mention, make him more ſick and miſerable, than any man can conceive who has not felt it; and if he complains (a weakneſs that few can avoid in ſickneſs or diſtreſs) he is ſure to have the remedy of the * Pork and a ſtring

‡ That Part of the Ship where any particular perſon's Hammock is, is ſo called by Seamen.

* It is a common Joke amongſt the Sailors, when a Landman is Sea-ſick, to adviſe him to tie a piece of Pork to a String, ſwallow it, and then draw it up again; and by repeating this often, the Sickneſs will be removed. This however, has its deſigned effect.

preſcribed, or to be laughed at; becauſe no one ever died of ſea-ſickneſs, and I believe alſo, that no one lever felt it who did not wiſh to die, rather than endure it. The only conſolation he has, is, that the miſerable condition he finds himſelf in, can make a Palace or a Dungeon the ſame thing.

After ſome days ſickneſs he begins to recover, and is outragiouſly hungry; the ſhip Captain thinks it beneath his dignity to let the marine pay his *quota* and meſs with him, and ſees no reaſon (nor do I) why he ſhould entertain him gratis; and as the marine has neither the command of fire-place nor cook; he muſt apply to the firſt Lieutenant to receive him into their * Meſs, who, if he be a good ſort of man, aſſures him he will propoſe it to his meſſmates, and at ſupper the whole are conſulted; where (after the Chaplain, or Purſer has warmly oppoſed it) he has a majority on his ſide, and the firſt lieutenant (claiming ſome merit in his ſucceſs) aquaints him that he is admitted: The marine then informs the lieutenant, that he quite forgot to mention two young Gentlemen that came with him, and who are

* The Lieutenants, the Maſter-Purſer, Surgeon and Chaplain, meſs together.

lieute-

lieutenants to his Company, that they are very young, and modeſt lads, and the ſons of Gentlemen of good families, and begs they may be admitted likewiſe into the general meſs; to this they one and all object, that they are very glad of his company, but beg to be excuſed admitting the others, that their meſs would then be too full, but that they will ſpeak to the Boatſwain and Carpenter to take them into their meſs; and even this I have known refuſed with that ſort of contempt, that the marine ought to ſhew to ſuch an offer.

Now, ſuppoſing the marine Captain has that ſentiment he ought, he withdraws from that meſs he has juſt been admitted to, to be with his Brother-officers; and then it is not to be conceived how uncomfortably they muſt live, even had they every kind of proviſion in ſtore, for want of a Cook and Fire-place to command, for all muſt ſtand clear, when the ſhip Captain's dinner is dreſſing; few dare interrupt it much while the Lieutenant's is providing, and the Boatſwain's I believe, is dreſſed and ſerved up the beſt of any. The King's coops for Fowls, are chiefly taken up by the ſhip Captain, and the remainder for the Lieutenants meſs; and as

to

to Sheep, (they except a few for the Captain) take up too much room in wartime.

The ſhip Captain will ſay, what is all this to me? to which I anſwer, it is; for he knows, that, without aſking his Lieutenants to receive the marine Officers into their meſs, that the being, fall a word or two in their favour, or intereſting himſelf in the leaſt about their being properly accommodated, is always of weight enough to get them taken into the Lieutenant's meſs, as they are in general, all obedience to his Will.

From the above few particulars that I have named (and for the truth of which, I appeal to all ſea and marine Officers) can it otherwiſe happen, but that diſagreements and ill-blood muſt ariſe between two ſuch uſeful bodies of men, and between whom there ought to be (except in matters of duty) no kind of difference: they all ſerve the ſame King, and all ſerve on board his ſhip, and are all ſurely equally intitled to the conveniences the King's ſhip affords; yet, "my ſhip, my cabbin, my boat, my marine Officer," are the expreſſions, by which a Marine is to learn, that the ſhip is the Captain's, and that he has no power or authority in, or over any thing in the King's ſhip, where he is as

uſeful

uſeful an Individual as any; no, not over his own men, but is frequently obliged to be a Spectator while they are often beat, for not knowing a particular Rope's name, and though they are not in fault for this, yet perhaps for this only, they are better acquainted with a ropes end than any other people in the ſhip; and whenever any diſagreement ariſes between the ſhip, and marine Officers, the men of the latter ſervice, are ſure to be the Innocent ſufferers for it. It was acknowledged laſt war, that the Marines were a very uſeful body of men, and a continual Nurſery for the Navy; but I can not help thinking, that unleſs ſome better Regulations are made, that their Officers are a great expence to the Public, and of little uſe, but as individuals in action; and that unleſs the command and diſcipline of their men while on board, is more under their own direction than it now is, Serjeants and Corporals would to the full, be of as much ſervice.

I would not have it thought, that I am here ſetting forth the caſe of every, or half the ſhips in the King's ſervice, no; I am only ſaying what I know has happened, what I know does now happen, and what will frequently happen again, unleſs regulated by a proper Authority. I know that there are many

many Gentlemen in the Navy, that from a thorough ſence of the uncomfortable accomodation of the marine Officers, have laid them in their State room, and ſlung in a Hammock themſelves: I have received that Indulgence myſelf from more than one; and I have known many marine Officers behave ſo very unlike Gentlemen on ſhip-board; that their being ſeparated from their Corps, could only have preſerved to them that commiſſion they would have forfeited, had they been guilty of ſuch behaviour at their Head-Quarters.

Another great cauſe of Diſcontent is, the the great diſproportion of Prize-money, and the manner in which the Crew are lumped in the Dividends. The Captain (if a ſingle ſhip, and not under the orders of an Admiral) receives three Eights to his ſhare. The Captain of Marines, the firſt, ſecond, third Lieutenant, and Maſter, receive one Eight between them. So that if a Man of War takes a Martinico-man, the Captain's Fortune is made, when the marine Captain and ſea Lieutenants, get only a little Pocket-money: and this perhaps, when neither conduct, nor courage was the cauſe, but meerly the luck of the Day; nay, perhaps the conſequence of his Negligence. The

marine Lieutenants, ſhare their Eighth with their Meſſmates, who are, the Carpenter, the Boatſwain, the Gunner, the Cook, and the Chaplain, for he is the loweſt man in the ſhip, and therefore theſe laſt may and do conclude, and often tell the marine Officers, "ſure we are as good as you, don't we "ſhare Prize-money with you?" &c. &c. and therefore ſurely it cannot be contempt in them to refuſe to meſs with them if they diſlike it, and which they will be ſure to do, unleſs the Marine has an over-proportion of Sea ſtock to lay in.

I would now aſk, if (after a Cruiſe of four months) a very young Gentleman, and one who had, until he entered in that Service, been uſed to good Company; and who during this cruiſe has converſed, and meſſed with the Boatſwain and Carpenter, ſhould not behave towards the ſhip Captain, with that politeneſs he ought? whether it would not rather turn againſt the Captain? than the young Gentleman ſhould be heard to ſay, "that he does not converſe much with his "marine Officers; becauſe they are low, "under-bred men."

Evil Communication corrupts good Manners.

And had I a Brother whom I loved, and chose to recommend him to an Admiral, or sea Captain to be his Boatswain; I would never think of providing for him by saying, "he was a sensible, well-bred man, and a "good seaman." For though a Boatswain cannot be a good one, who is not the latter; yet neither can he be a good one, and the former.

I have as much Dislike to the Manners in general, of the French nation, as any Englishman ought; but yet I cannot help thinking, as they do, with Respect to the Great Cabbin of a Man of War, which is their Council-chamber and Place, where all such Gentlemen who have the King's Commission, have at all Times a free admittance to, and Use of the conveniences annexed to it; one of which, however trifling it may appear to Landmen, is well known to all who have been to Sea, to be a Matter of great Comfort, I do not mean Eating, but the getting rid of its consequences without a Breeches full of Salt-water, which no Man but the Captain, can at all times be secure from, not to mention the Dirt, Smoak, and

Stink,

Stink, every one muſt wade through, to get his Poſteriors pickled.

Now, conſidering the great Advantage a Captain of a Man of War has in Point of Profit, over all his Ship-mates, even ſhould Men of his own, or ſuperior Rank, happen to ſerve on board him; conſidering how very Uncomfortable the beſt part of a Ship is, in bad Winter-weather; conſidering how much worſe, and leſs able to bear a Sea life, Land-men are, than thoſe bred to the Sea. ſhould not every Captain of a Man of War, conſider how to make ſuch a Life as agreeable to thoſe who ſerve with him, as he can? and conſequently, let every Gentleman who behaves like one, have the (bad at beſt) Accomodation the Ship affords. If he ſhould ſay by converſing too freely, or being too intimate with his Officers, may leſſen his Authority, &c. I anſwer, that ſuch a one is not equal to the Truſt repoſed in him, for a Man may keep up his Authority and Command, with more Reſpect, by a mild, humane Behaviour, than by all the State and Diſtance he has in Power to aſſume.

There

There were, to my certain Knowledge laſt War, many Men of the beſt Families in *England*, in the Marine ſervice, ſome of whom at this Time, make a Figure in the moſt Auguſt Aſſembly in the Nation; and I am informed that there are many in the preſent War, nay, I know ſome, one of which I lately met: He is a Man of good Character, ſerved with much Reputation all the laſt War, and I think he is the eldeſt Son of a noble Family. This Gentleman ſhewed me his Leave of Abſence from his ſhip after a long cruize, it was for fouteen Days, and I think, ſigned by the Secretary to the late Admiralty, and backed by the ſhip Captain and Admiral, commanding at the Port where his ſhip lay; and, except deſcribing his Perſon, (leſt he ſhould deſert) it ran in the ſame Form as a private Soldier's Furlow. This Gentleman aſſured me, that the Marine ſervice was much more diſagreeable now, than in the laſt War, and that we both experienced then; how wide the Difference, while they were called by the King, his Marine Regiments of Foot; and while they were looked upon by his Royal Highneſs the Duke, to be under his wiſe Direction, and a

Part

Part of that Army whoſe preſent modelling, the Safety of this Nation does, and can depend. The incompleatneſs of Corps, fictitious Names, working mens Pay, Faggots, muſtering of Servants, Grievances, before continually cried out againſt, are now forgot. And I know ſome Captains in the Army at this Time, (by Miſtake of their recruiting Officers) that have a man or two, more in their Company than compleats it. Such is now the Diſcipline of the Army, and ſuch would have been the Diſcipline of the Marines had they continued under the ſame wiſe Commander: for though this was alltered, and thought to be for the good of the Service, I perceive no other Effect it has had, but to leſſen the Opinion of the Service to thoſe who are in it, and thoſe that are not; and alſo, thoſe with whom they are to ſerve; and well it may have this Effect, when they ſee, and feel the Difference that is made between them, and what is improperly called the "proper ſhip Officers; for ſurely *now*, there ought to be no Diſtinction, but to ſhew there is, I ſhall ſet down in their proper Order, the Conveniences alotted to the ſea Officers, from the Captain to the Carpenter, and from the Carpenter to the Lieutenant of Marines.

The

The Captain's Apartments in a line of battle Ship are the Great cabbin, the State room, *i. e.* the Bed room, the Steerage, (in ſome ſhips, larger than the Great cabbin) Coops for fowls, Penns for ſheep, Store-rooms, and Lockers, &c. innumerable.

The firſt, ſecond and third Lieutenants, each a very good ſtanding-cabbin: the The Maſter, a very good ſtanding-cabbin: The Purſer, the Surgeon, the Gunner, the Boatſwain and the Carpenter, each a very good ſtanding-cabbin, and ſometimes the Captain's Clerk, if he be called a Secretary; as to the Chaplain, I cannot ſay whether he has a Cabbin or not, but if he has, I believe it is in the Bread-room; but all the above being proper ſhip Officers, muſt be firſt provided for. The Captain of Marines comes next to be thought on, whoſe *Birth*, is deſcribed above, and I believe ſome of the Lieutenants of Marines have the ſame kind of Apartment. But this is not all the inconvenience the poor Marine ſuffers, for his apartment being between two Guns, every time they give chaſe to any ſhip that looks like one of force, the ſhip is neceſſarily

rily cleared for engaging, and the firſt proper orders given, is to ſee that all is clear fore and aft. between Decks, *i. e.* all cabbins nocked down, and cheſts, deſks, chairs, ſtools, tables, and in ſhort, every thing but the guns, turned top-ſide turf-ſide into the Hold, or over-board; and this happens perhaps to cruiſing ſhips, two or three times a a week, and indeed, it is well enough it does; for, if it was not for pulling down and rebuilding this Hovel, a Captain of Marines would have nothing to do but in time of action, and then indeed, he and his men would have enough to do, as their ſtation (the Poop) is more expoſed to the Enemy's Fire than any other part of the ſhip. It is to be obſerved, that though I mentioned above, that all cabbins are to be pulled down when the ſhip is cleared for Action, this Order does not extend ſo high, as to effect the Cook, or Carpenter's cabbin, but only reaches to the Marine, the other cabbins being generally framed with doors and lights, and are fixtures, not temporay-cabbins, nor particular indulgences, ſuch as the Marine's are. Now, is it not ſtrange! that the difference of one man being called a Sea-Officer, and the other a Marine, ſhould create a kind of

Jealouſy

Jealouſy that will, in little Minds, more or leſs, continually ſhew itſelf? But to ſhew the Truth of this Obſervation, I ſhall conclude with a Story to confirm it.

" At the commencement of the late war with *Spain*, a certain *Great Sea-Commander* applied to a *Weſt-India* Governor, for a number of Land-forces to aſſiſt on an expedition of great Importance, by way of Marines: (for no ſuch Corps was then in being) the Governor complied with his Requeſt, the men were embarked, and under the protection of *ſix ſhips only* were landed, and ſword-in-hand, carried the Fortreſs againſt which they were ſent. But on their firſt embarking, one of their Officers finding no Bed nor Hammocks provided for his men, repreſented their caſe to the Great Sea-commander, and deſired, if there was not hammocks to be had, nor room to hang them in, which was the Great man's objection, that they might *turn in* to the ſeamen's hammocks who had the watch on Deck; for as every ſeaman has his own hammock, and as one-half only are of the watch at a time, conſequently ſome hundred hammocks are always unoccupied; but this he flatly refuſed, ſaid, " that every man's hammock was his cheſt in war-time as well as his bed, and ought to be as ſacred as if

locked up, as he there kept his ſhirts, and ſuch other neceſſaries as he had, and which he could not preſerve if his hammock was open to every, or any one who pleaſed to uſe it." This to be ſure, was a mark of great tenderneſe and care for his *Brother-Sailors*; but the *poor Soldiers* (in that hot climate) went ſometimes to ſleep on the upper Deck, and in the open air, ſome of whom never awoke, and many died for want of that ſhelter which they had a right to expect. But what is very remarkable, (and I was an eye-witneſs to the Truth of it) that when one of theſe poor Soldiers was ſtript of his *red coat* and *yellow breeches*, in order to be ſewed up when dead, in that very * Vehicle he was refuſed when living, the niceſt eye could not diſcover, whether his former habit had been red or blue, or whether he wore long trowſers or ſhort breeches; in ſhort, he looked as much like an *Engliſhman*, as if he had been a *Seaman*, and as much like a *Seaman*, (when ſewed up in a *Hammock*) as if he had laid in one all his life.

* Sailors are ſewed up in Hammocks, when buried at Sea, with a Cannon-ſhot in the End, to ſink the Corps.

The

The above is only a ſketch of ſome inconveniences, if not hardſhips, the Marine is liable to, that the Sea-officer is not, and for which reaſon a continual Jealouſy (like that between Regulars and Militia) is likely to ſubſiſt: but as by a late regulation of Rank, between the land and ſea Officers; a captain of Foot or Marines has an equal rank on ſhore, with a ſea Lieutenant: may they not flatter themſelves that your Lordſhips will give Directions, that their Conveniences on board, be equal alſo; and that ſuch Marines who cannot conveniently meſs with their Equals, may at leaſt, have an equal right to the King's fire, and the Ship's cook, to provide for themſelves. At preſent there are eſtabliſhed Rules, and Orders for ſea Officers to be regulated by; but the poor, amphibious Marine, knows not where, or what he is about: when on ſhore, he is without his men; when on board, no authority over them; but in Action, he is *uſeful*; and therefore I may venture to ſay for him, that he will have hopes, when he ſees this imperfect State of his Caſe laid before your Lordſhips, that it may be taken into your wiſe conſideration; and that this poor, but well-meant attempt, may not be thought an impertinent one, as the Author is ſenſible of his inability to write properly;

but

but is alſo, of his diſ-intereſted motive; and therefore flatters himſelf that his having been bred to Arms, and not to Letters, will excuſe his faults in writing, and the liberty to addreſs to your Lordſhips what he wiſhes for the Good of the Service in general, and for the Satisfaction of the Marines in particular.

I am,

My Lords, &c.

The AUTHOR.